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United States Department of Agriculture

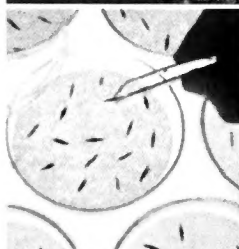
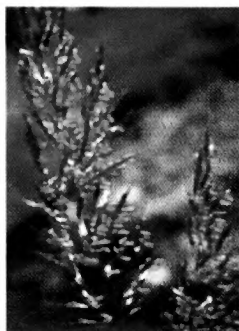


Plant Materials Program

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National Plant Materials Center

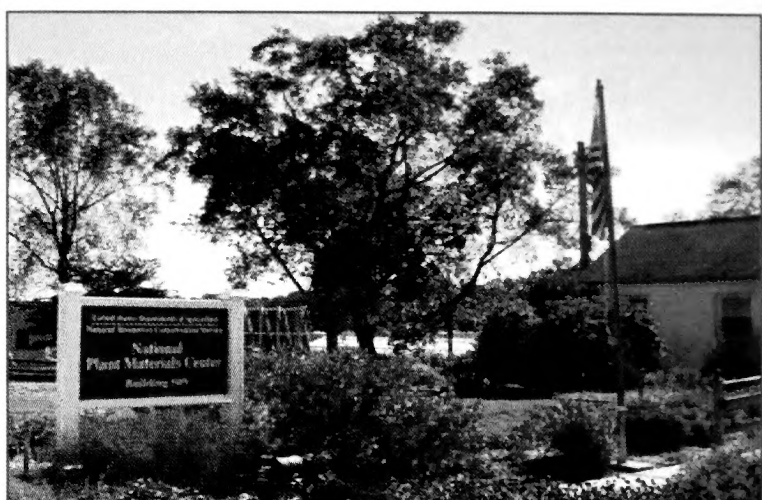
Beltsville, Maryland



U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Who We Are

Established in 1939 as a direct result of the huge environmental damage caused by the Dust Bowl of the Great Depression, the National Plant Materials Center (NPMC) is strategically located, with other federal research agencies, at the world renowned Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC). The BARC site was selected because it offers a moderate climate permitting cultivation of a wide variety of plants.

The NPMC currently manages approximately 285 acres owned by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The NPMC supports the national and regional activities of the Plant Materials Program. On the national level, this includes assisting with technology transfer and the release of new plants for conservation uses. On a regional level, this includes developing technology to assist land managers and field offices in the mid-Atlantic states with restoring and improving native plant communities in upland, wetland, riparian and other natural areas. The ultimate goal of this work is to improve the health of our environment, especially in urban areas and the Chesapeake Bay region.



Our National Activities

The NPMC provides technical assistance to the national program and to the 25 PMCs and 20 plant materials specialists located throughout the United States. The NPMC serves the Plant Materials Program in the following areas:

- ◆ Designs, develops and implements a public affairs program, which includes preparing newsletters, development of national Plant Materials Program Internet homepages and cataloging all Plant Materials Program written information
- ◆ Assists in the specimen verification, documentation and interagency coordination required in the release of improved plant materials, and keeps databases and publications on Plant Materials Program releases current
- ◆ Serves as the principal point-of-contact in the exchange of germplasm and data between NRCS and government and scientific institutions both nationally and internationally
- ◆ Functions as support staff for the Plant Materials Program Leader

Our Regional Activities

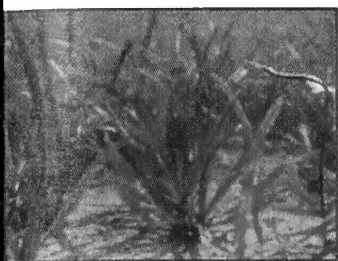
Native Plants



The NPMC has grown over 115 species of plants native to the mid-Atlantic and mid-Appalachian regions and has developed propagation, production, and establishment techniques for many of these species. The NPMC works almost exclusively with native plants. Much of the basis for this work stems from

cooperative agreements with the USDI-National Park Service (NPS) to assist the Parks with their revegetation efforts.

Based on its experience, the NPMC is in the process of developing locally adapted releases of several cool and warm-season grasses and forbs that have the potential to be used in many conservation practices in this region.



Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

Submerged aquatic vegetation, or SAV, is critical to coastal ecosystems. SAV filters water by trapping sediments and nutrients, provides habitat and food for commercially important animal species, and reduces shoreline erosion by slowing wave energy. In areas such as the Chesapeake Bay, declining SAV populations have challenged restoration groups looking for more efficient methods to reestablish SAV. Production methods for different species are being developed to restore SAV beds.



Plant Evaluation

The NPMC evaluates plant species and cultivars for local adaptation and suitability for various conservation practices. The NPMC is conducting warm-season and cool-season

grass forage variety trials from which forage productivity and growth curve data will be published as well as incorporated into the C-Graz grazing planning tool to assist farmers in optimizing their grazing operations.



Plants for Stabilization

Streambank stabilization is important in reducing sediment and pollutants flowing into urban streams, especially in the Washington, D.C. area. The NPMC is collecting and evaluating local ecotype materials which will be better adapted.

Plant Materials Living Exhibits

The NPMC maintains display gardens featuring species and cultivars for use in conservation practices in the eastern U.S., plant species native to Maryland and ground covers for use in agricultural and urban settings.

The Plant Materials Program's 26 Regional Facilities



Cooperators

The NPMC cooperates with numerous groups to address conservation concerns:

- ◆ Maryland NRCS
- ◆ NRCS National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA
- ◆ USDA Agricultural Research Service
- ◆ USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- ◆ National Park Service
- ◆ US Department of Interior – Fish & Wildlife Service
- ◆ Maryland Department of Agriculture
- ◆ Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- ◆ University of Maryland
- ◆ Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- ◆ Anne Arundel Community College Environmental Center, Arnold, MD
- ◆ Maryland State Highway Administration

For More Information

Web site

Visit our Plant Materials Internet site:

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

to find more information on solving conservation problems using plants.



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Visitor Information

The NPMC welcomes visits by individuals and groups. The Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Visitors are encouraged to call in advance for a tour of the Center.

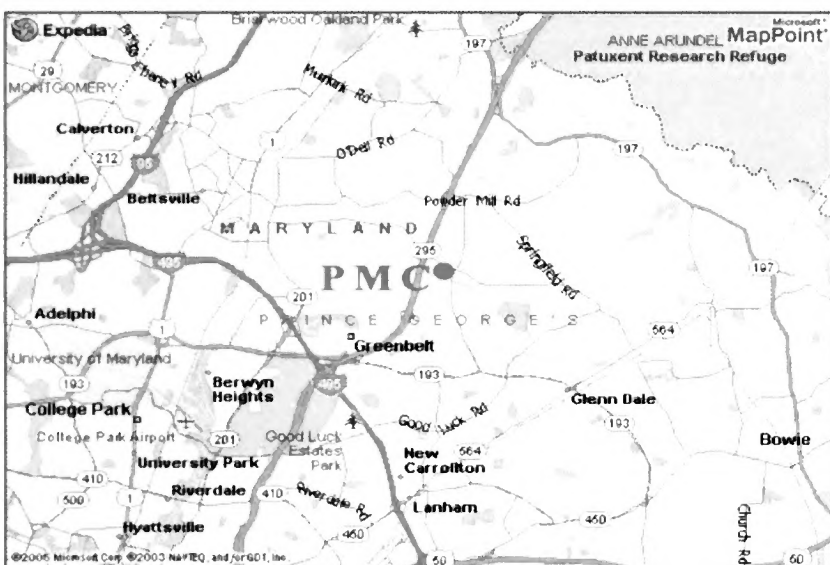
Address & Phone Number

Building 509 BARC-East
Beaver Dam Road
Beltsville, Maryland 20705
Phone: (301) 504-8175
Fax: (301) 504-8741



Directions to the National Plant Materials Center

The National PMC is located in central Maryland on the USDA Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. From the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, exit at Beltsville/Powder Mill Rd. and go east on Powder Mill Rd. Go approximately 400 yards and turn right on Soil Conservation Service Rd. Go approximately 1 mile and turn right on Beaver Dam Road going west. The Center is 300 yards on the left.



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